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ABSTRACT

Cultural values affect both the quality and equality of women's lives on individual and social levels. Values about women's roles vary cross-culturally. This study investigated adolescents' values about women's roles in the Phillipines and the United States. A tri-method study was conducted with adolescents aged 11 to 17 who attended schools in the Phillipines or the United States. First 537 participants rated the importance of 10 characteristics of the ideal woman. Second, participants drew a picture of the ideal woman doing something. Third, 49 adolescents acted as drawing interpreters. The results indicated that adolescent students from both countries described the ideal woman as hardworking, pleasant, kind, and honest. However, adolescents' views differed according to gender, nationality, and attendance at public or private schools. The meaning of the responses was elucidated by the qualitative study in which adolescents interpreted drawings of women cooking and working in offices. Women working in offices in the Phillipines were described as rebellious, untidy, sexy, and beautiful. Girls emphasized women working in non-traditional roles, having a good job, and achieving; they also valued the personal characteristics important to work success, including being intelligent and responsible. Attachments include 5 tables and 10 figures. (19 references) (ABL)

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Hardworking and Pleasant: The Ideal Woman as Described by Adolescents in the United States and the Philippines.

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Adolescent students from the Philippines and the U.S.A. described the ideal woman as hardworking, pleasant, kind, and honest; however, adolescents' views differed according to gender, nationality, and attendance at public or private schools, with girls in both countries rating as more important having a good job and being intelligent.

Cultural values affect both the quality and equality of women's lives on individual and social levels. Values about women's roles vary cross-culturally (Best, Williams, Cloud, Davis, Robertson, Edwards, Giles, & Fowles, 1977, Williams & Best, 1990). For example, views about women working either as homemakers or employed outside the home differed among men and women from Brazil, the Philippines and the U.S. (Skeen, Paguio, Robinson, & Deal, 1988). Although women from these three countries equally valued working outside the home, the U.S. women showed less preference for the role of homemaker.

The present study investigated adolescent's values about women's roles in the Philippines and the U.S. To the extent that adolescents are culture informers and share the values of their society (Solibio, 1981), we predicted that their values would coincide with those of adults. In addition, women's roles are changing worldwide and adolescents' views may reflect these changes.

The data in this presentation are part of a larger study of adolescent ideals in different parts of the world. The comparisons of respondents from the Philippines and the U.S. are particularly interesting because there are cultural differences between these countries, including more collectivistic values (a "we" consciousness) in the Philippines and more individualistic values (an "I" consciousness) in the U.S. At the same time, language barriers can be minimized because English is the language of instruction in many schools of both countries.

Methods

A tri-method study was conducted with adolescents, who were 11 to 17 years old with a mean age of 14, and attended either public and private schools in the Philippines or the U.S.A. See Table 1. First, 537 participants rated the importance of 10 characteristics of the ideal woman on a seven-point scale. Scores ranged from 1 (not at all important) to 7 (very important). Characteristics rated, adapted from Clifford, Grandgenett, & Bardwell (1981), ranged from internal qualities such as intelligent, kind and honest, to external qualities such as good looking, popular, and having a good job. Second, participants drew a picture of the ideal woman doing something. In order to explore valued activities and gender roles, the content of the drawings was scored for fifteen categories including whether the ideal woman was depicted in work or homemaking activities, whether she was drawn with emphasis on sexual characteristics, and whether she was depicted alone or with others (Gibbons, Stiles, Schnellmann, & Morales-Hidalgo, 1990). The third method involved an additional forty-nine adolescents participating as drawing interpreters. These adolescent interpreters wrote what they believed the adolescent artists had in mind when drawing the ideal woman. They commented on representative drawings of the ideal woman cooking or working in an office. It should be noted that the adolescent interpreters reviewed drawings from their respective countries. Interpreter's written reports were scored for frequently occurring themes.

Results

Ratings of the 10 qualities were analyzed by a 2 country x 2 type of school (private or public) x 2 gender MANOVA, and univariate post hocs. There was no significant three-way interaction noted on the MANOVA computed for the ten characteristics of the ideal woman. Main effects were demonstrated for gender, country,and whether the school was public or private (Table 2). Girls rated being very intelligent, and having a good job, and boys rated being sexy and good looking as more important. Main effects for country revealed the greater importance for U.S.A. adolescents of the qualitites being fun, popular, sexy, and good looking. Students attending private schools more highly rated being very intelligent, fun, popular, good looking and sexy. There was also a two-way interaction occurred between school type and country for the qualities of being fun and being popular as seen in Figure 10.

Chi square analysis of the drawings as seen in Tables 3, 4, and 5 demonstrated gender, country, and school type differences. Table 3 depicts the gender differences: that boys more often emphasized sexual characteristics of the ideal woman, drew her doing homemaking activities, and in a stereotyped role and drew her alone. Girls were more likely to depict the ideal woman working at a job, having adult responsibilities, smiling, in a non-traditional or dual role, and emphasized inner qualities, appearance, and achievement. Table 4 shows the country differences, that more students in the U.S. drew the ideal woman in a nontraditional or dual role, smiling, performing adult responsibilities, and with sexual emphasis. In the Philippines the ideal woman was more often depicted in a traditional role, alone, with mention of her inner qualities and appearance. Table 5 shows the differences between students from public and private

schools. Students attending public schools more often drew the ideal woman smiling and students attending private schools more often mentioned inner qualities.

The themes in the written comments about drawings of the women working in offices and women cooking from the Philippines and the U.S.A. were identified. While students in both the United States and the Philippines interpreted women working in offices as hardworking, students in the Philippines also saw office workers as rebellious, untidy, beautiful and sexy, as seen in Figure 1. U.S.A. students saw them as longing for other jobs and bored with the routine of office work (Figure 2). Women cooking were seen as content and pleasing others by most interpreters, but students in the Philippines often saw them as burdened by the onus of cooking, concerned with food, or organized (Figure 3). Students in the U.S.A. more often idealized the "happy housewife" role (Figure 4). The scoring of the themes was reviewed by a trained second rater. Kappa values for interrater agreement ranged from .83 to .95. All Kappa values were significant, $p < .05$.

Discussion

Adolescent's values about women's roles and personal qualities varied according to gender, culture, and whether they attended public or private schools.

Gender differences in attitudes about women are striking in their consistency. In many different cultures, girls and women held less traditional attitudes about women's roles than did boys and men (Basow, 1982; Basow, 1986; Caballero, 1971; Galambos, Petersen, Richards, & Gitelson, 1985; Gibbons, Stiles, Morton, 1990; Intons-Peterson, 1988; Kremer & Curry, 1987; Offer, Ostrov, Howard, & Atkinson, 1988; Seginer, Karayanni, & Mar'i, 1990). In the present study adolescent girls emphasized women working in non-traditional roles, having a good job, and achieving; they also valued the personal characteristics important to work success including being intelligent and responsible (Figure 5). Adolescent boys drew the ideal woman with sexual emphasis, in a traditional role, and said she must be sexy and good looking, characteristics that are not sufficient for success in the work force (Figure 6). As demonstrated by both the ratings and the drawings, the defining characteristics of the ideal woman for boys are physical and traditional; for girls, they are less traditional and more achievement-oriented.

There were also differences which reflected national or cultural values. On the questionnaire and drawings U.S. adolescents emphasized the importance of being fun, popular, good looking and sexy, and drew the ideal woman with adult responsibilities and smiling (Figure 7). The emphasis on external and hedonistic values is characteristic of persons from individualistic countries such as the U.S. A. (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1989). Philippine adolescents drew women in more

traditional roles, wrote more about the inner qualities of the ideal woman (patient, honest, simple, giving, of good character), as well as her appearance (neat, tidy). See Figure 8. The emphasis on inner qualities may be part of the collectivistic orientation toward good interpersonal relationships (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1989) and may also reflect an indigenous Philippine psychology (Church, 1987) .

The meaning of these responses was further elucidated by the qualitative study in which adolescents interpreted drawings of women cooking and working in offices (Figure 9). Although adolescents in both countries drew the ideal woman working in a job, or cooking at home, the interpretations suggested different meanings of these images in the two countries. For example, women working in offices in the Philippines were described as rebellious, untidy, sexy, and beautiful. For middle-class women to be employed in the Philippines may be a status symbol since employment represents being educated, and displays social upward mobility. One adolescent described office work as a "job with dignity".

Although the primary reason that women work is economic, additional benefits for U.S. women may be personal growth and psychological well-being. Authors have theorized that in developed countries work is not necessarily attached to survival, but to psychological characteristics such as self-esteem. For adolescent interpreters in the U.S., the woman office worker represented someone who was not getting personal satisfaction from her work; she was bored and looking for something else. U.S. adolescents were more inclined to admire the president of a company or a five-star general.

Women cooking were also viewed differently by adolescents in the U.S. and the

Philippines. In the Philippines, cooking was viewed as exhausting and onerous. Several researchers have suggested that in the Philippines there is relatively less sex equity in the home than in the workplace, and that women continue to bear primary responsibility for household chores. Religion has also reinforced the importance of self-sacrifice to the homemaking role for women in the Philippines (Jayawardena, 1986). In the U.S. adolescents' ideas about women cooking reflected the individualistic values of happiness, contentment, and making a choice about cooking. One young person wrote that the woman cooking, "is at home because she wants to be."

There were some differences between the views of adolescents attending private schools and those attending public schools. These differences probably reflect economic status; in general, students attending private schools endorsed more "modern" values, reflecting greater affluence and more leisure time.

In summary, the three different methods used to examine adolescents' values about women's roles and qualities revealed gender and cultural differences.

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Author notes

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Table 1

Three Methods Employed in Study of Philippine and U.S. Adolescents

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1. Ratings of 10 qualities of ideal woman

   1 = not at all important, 7 = very important

   qualities:

likes children	has a good job
is of average height and weight	very intelligent
is fun	is popular
is sexy	has good looks
has lots of money	is kind and honest

2. Drawings of the ideal woman doing something.

3. Interpretations by other adolescents of representative drawings of the ideal woman cooking or working in offices.

Table 2. Mean ratings for each of 10 qualities of the ideal woman by gender, country, and type of school.

	Gender		Country		School	
	Girls (n=251)	Boys (n=336)	Philippines (n=197)	U.S.A. (n=390)	Public (n=523)	Private (n=64)
She is kind and honest.	6.63	6.49	6.50	6.58	6.55	6.59
She likes kids.	5.68	5.54	5.61	5.59	5.63	5.36
She is of average height and weight.	4.66	5.04 [1]	4.75	4.94	4.88	4.88
She is very intelligent.	5.72 [1]	5.46	5.50	5.61	5.53	5.94 [3]
She is fun.	5.89	5.96	4.98	6.41 [2]	5.88	6.39 [3]
She is popular.	3.85	3.84	3.60	3.96 [2]	3.79	4.27 [3]
She has good looks.	4.60	5.67 [1]	4.89	5.37 [2]	5.19	5.36 [3]
She is sexy.	3.94	5.43 [1]	3.99	5.19 [2]	4.79	4.80 [3]
She has a good job.	5.75 [1]	5.15	5.82	5.21	5.36	5.81 [3]
She has a lot of money.	3.63	3.79	3.63	3.77	3.68	4.05

[1] rated as significantly more important than by other gender, $p < .05$.
[2] rated as significantly more important by U.S.A. than Filipino students, $p < .05$.
[3] rated as significantly more important by students attending private schools, $p < .05$.

Table 3

Percentage of Drawings of Girls and Boys Displaying Scored Attributes

Characteristics of drawings	Gender	
	Girls' drawings (n = 251)	Boys' drawings (n = 336)
Work activity	75.2 *	56.5
Smiling	74.9 *	62.8
Adult responsibilities	58.4 *	31.4
Non-traditional or dual role	55.2 *	38.3
Comments about inner qualities	18.5 *	9.6
Comments about appearance	14.7 *	7.8
Achievement imagery	13.8 *	4.1
Traditional role	44.8	61.7 *
Homemaking activity	24.8	43.5 *
Alone	72.3	80.3 *
Sexual emphasis	1.3	7.2 *

* Significantly greater than drawings by the opposite gender, $p < .05$.

Table 4

Percentage of Drawings in the Philippines and the U.S.A. Displaying Scored Attributes

Characteristics of drawings	Country	
	Philippines (n = 197)	U.S.A. (n = 390)
Traditional role	79.5 *	46.2
Comments about appearance	22.8 *	6.3
Comments about inner qualities	22.1 *	10.3
Alone	83.4 *	74.2
Non-traditional or dual role	20.5	53.8 *
Smiling	50.3	75.0 *
Adult responsibilities	33.1	47.3 *
Sexual emphasis	1.4	5.9 *

* Significantly greater than drawings from the other country, $p < .05$.

Table 5

Percentage of Drawings by Students from Public and Private Schools Displaying Scored Attributes

Characteristics of drawings	School type	
	Public (n = 523)	Private (n = 64)
Smiling	70.3 *	51.7
Comments about inner qualities	12.3	23.0 *

* Significantly greater than drawings from the other type of school, $p < .05$.

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Drawings of the ideal woman working in an office from the Philippines.

Figure 2. Drawings of the ideal woman working in an office from the United States.

Figure 3. Drawings of the ideal woman cooking from the Philippines.

Figure 4. Drawings of the ideal woman cooking from the United States.

Figure 5. Comments on drawings by girls that illustrate the importance of achieving and having a good job.

Figure 6. Comments on drawings by boys that illustrate the importance of the ideal woman being good looking and sexy.

Figure 7. Comments on drawings by U.S. A. adolescents that illustrate fun, smiling, and adult roles.

Figure 8. Comments on drawings by Filipino adolescents that illustrate the importance of inner qualities of the ideal woman.

Figure 9. Examples from the interpretations of drawings.

Figure 10. The interaction between type of school and country for two qualities, fun and popular.

Fig. 6

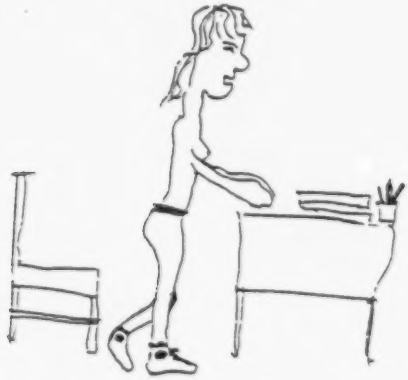

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Fig. 2

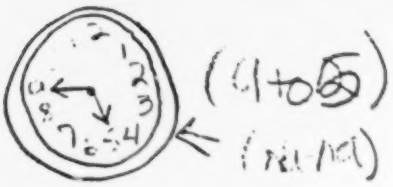

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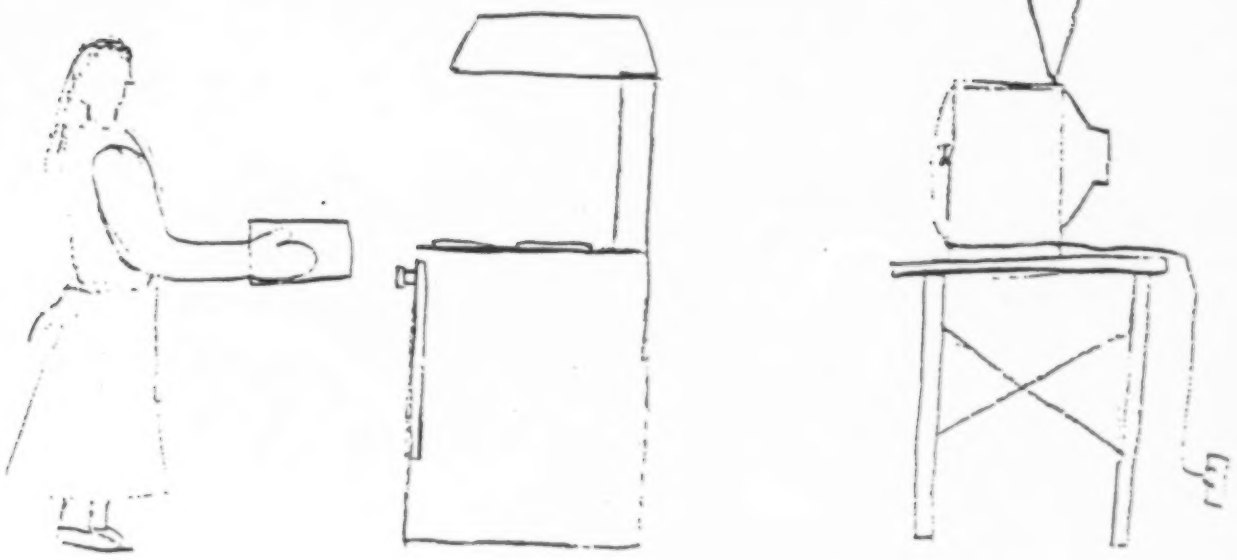
Fig. 3



Baking and watching

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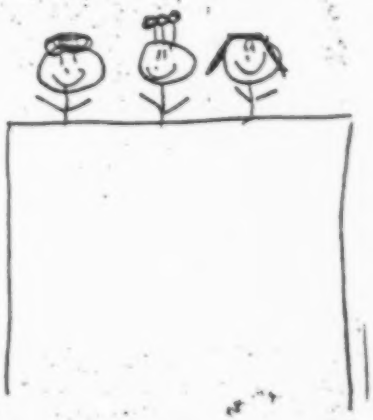
Fig. 4



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Adolescent girls emphasized women working in non-traditional roles, having a good job, and achieving

Examples of U.S.A. drawings of the ideal women:

She' a five star general who flies jets
16 year old girl

She's dancing her way to the top
16 year old girl

She's the state treasurer - shows that a woman may be just as powerful
15 year old girl

Examples of Philippine drawings of the ideal woman:

She must strive and devote most of her time in her studies
15 year girl

She will be successful in her life so that she can help the other people who need her
14 year old girl

She has a good job but she is not beautiful
13 year old girl

Adolescent boys emphasized women being good looking and sexy

Examples of U.S.A. drawings of the ideal woman:

laying out to get a suntan in a very sexy suit
15 year old boy

big breasts, great figure, curly, long light brown hair
15 year old boy

hairstylist, fashion conscious
15 year old boy

Examples of Philippine drawings of the ideal woman:

sexy, beautiful, active
16 year old boy

She is looking at me. She is dancing. She is showing her beauty.
14 year old boy

She is posing because she is a model.
16 year old boy

U.S.A. adolescents emphasized fun, smiling, and adult roles

Examples of boys' drawings of the ideal woman:

She's kind, warm-hearted, friendly, always smiling
15 year old boy

She's a good cook, athletic, loves to have fun, listens to music
15 year old boy

Examples of girls' drawings of the ideal woman:

hard working, determined, self-motivated woman
15 year old girl

working hard for her own satisfaction
14 year old girl

Filipino adolescents wrote more about the inner qualities of the ideal woman

Examples of girls' drawings of the ideal woman:

She is honest and thoughtful woman
17 year old girl

Beauty is useless but character is the best
16 year old girl

Examples of boys' drawings of the ideal woman:

About the personality of my ideal woman - simple, honest, understanding
17 year old boy

the one that has a high dignity
16 year old boy

In a qualitative study the adolescents interpreted drawings of women working in offices and cooking

The lady ... seems to be rebellious because she is doing the things opposite of what is expected.
The woman ... is a prim, proper, well-behaved secretary.

16 year old Philippine girl

These women have a 9 to 5 job as a secretary and/or computer operator. They know that when they come into work, they have a long boring day ahead of them, and they will be doing the same thing all day.

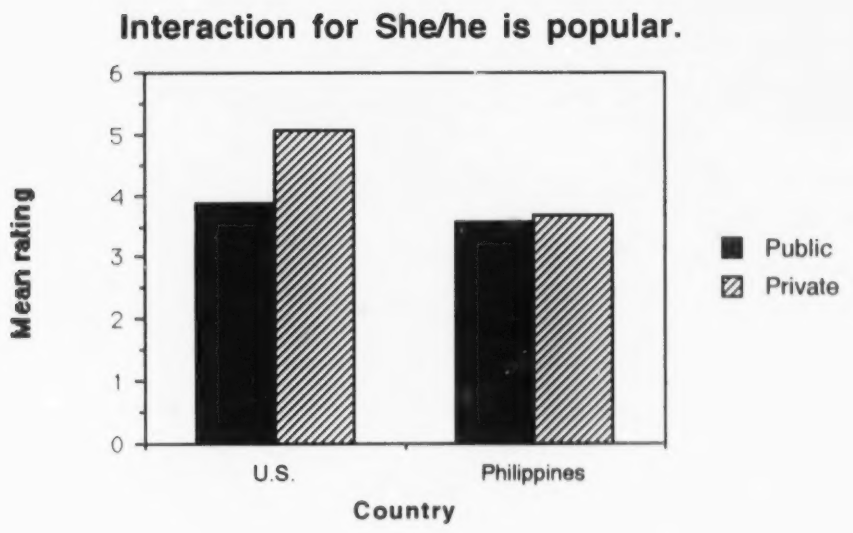
17 year old U.S.A. girl

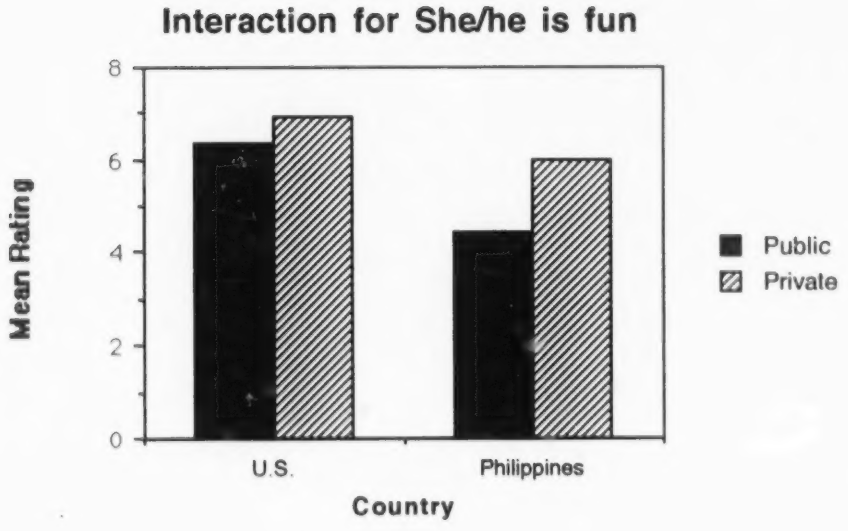
The ... girl seems not to be too interested in cooking. She was only forced. The ... lady looks really exhausted from her work. She seems to say, "The sooner I get over with this, the better!"

16 year old Philippine girl

The mothers look happy enough - I don't see any reason not to be I'd be happy to cook for my kid

18 year old U.S.A. girl


Interaction for She/he is popular.
Mean rating
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
U.S.
Philippines
Country
Public
Private


Interaction for She/he is fun
Mean Rating
8
6
4
2
0
U.S.
Philippines
Country
Public
Private